

were made aware of their identity.

In the final chapter of the book, Kaplan turns to Spain. In 'Demonstrating to Remember in Spain' she examines the politics of the last years of Franco's government and women's efforts to shape the country's democratic future and address the profound gender inequality in the fascist era. Here, too, women and youth grapple with a collective desire to bury the past.

The repressive and violent regimes of Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s and the interminable reign of Franco in Spain left a death toll that is barely comprehensible. These regimes, though, produced resistance movements, sometimes consisting of unlikely participants like women and youth who lacked basic civil rights and who were firmly excluded from the public arena. That Pinochet may yet face justice has depended on the courageous opposition movements fomented in dangerous times. This book is a testament to the importance of feminist and left-wing organizing from the 1970s to the 1990s. Kaplan demonstrates the critical role of physical ritual in protesting locally and globally, across languages and cultures. While this book lacks the visual images she purports to be so central to direct action, she may be forgiven. Here she has given us the stories of individual women and young people who lost so much but who risked their own lives by using their bodies to tell stories their oppressors and history denied.

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John D. French, *Drowning in Laws: Labor Law and Brazilian Political Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

Drowning in Laws starts by rejecting the substitution of purported class interests and behaviours for the words that express them (discourse). From that point French launches two premises. First, social conflict finds expression through speech. Second, the law is a crucial focal point for that expression. Combining methods in labour, cultural, and legal history the book starts chronologically with the 1943 Consolidation of Labour Laws (CLT) under corporatist and ostensibly pro-worker president Getulio Vargas. French maintains that as an amalgam of worker protections and advances the CLT was illusory. During the six decades that followed, workers became concerned with transforming the ideals behind the CLT into reality; they quickly came to see their country as "drowning in laws but starving for justice" (152). Drawing on a broad array of strong primary and secondary sources, French shows how workers used the CLT as a weapon to achieve social justice. He breaks down, refor-

mulates, and then solves many associated problems in Brazilian history. It is reductionist, for example, to simply affirm or deny *Varguista* foundational myths as many scholars have done. In considering Vargas' complex legacy as both author of the CLT and defender of elite interests, French brings to bear a study of legal instruments and institutions in their relation to working people.

Focusing primarily on Sao Paulo, the hub of urban working-class activity in the latter half of the twentieth century, *Drowning* assesses how scholars have approached the CLT in the past. French is especially concerned with discourses and actions of the authors of labour law, government ministry staffs, and members of labour courts. But the book's principal strength lies in its attention to the discourses of workers and labour activists in their response to and use of the CLT to advance worker interests. The intersection of worker politics and the activist interpretation of labour law led to distinct forms of social critique, protest, mobilization, and politics among Brazilian workers that in turn shaped the labour movement and how it functioned. If there is a chronological climax to this conjuncture of legal, social, and political strategies it would be the emergence of Luis Inácio "Lula" da Silva. Lula's political rise began in radical labour protest in 1970s Sao Paulo. In the 1980s and 1990s he transformed his regional workers' base into a national political movement that led in the end to his election as President of the Republic.

Is *Drowning* labour history? French is at pains to point out that this is more than "a straightforward social history of labour" (xi). But by effectively integrating alternate methodologies – modern and postmodern – French has charted new directions for labour history. The result is a fascinating book, exciting for how it draws on (and in French's words engages with) the discursive turn and postmodern theory as well as newer methodologies in the histories of the law, work, and working peoples. But *Drowning* is also profoundly challenging for the manner in which the author grounds his thinking in the trajectory of Latin American labour history. It has been a long time since I have read as theoretically innovative a study so meticulously researched in Latin American primary and secondary sources that also draws so richly and thoughtfully on the works of Charles Bergquist, Hobart Spalding, and (the early) Alain Touraine, among other "older" labour historians.

Drowning invites comparison with *Doña María's Story: Life History, Memory, and Political Identity*, Daniel James' outstanding study of working people in Peronist Argentina. French and James are among a small handful of the preeminent historians of Latin American labour/work writing in English today. Each book represents a different sort of pinnacle in the field. In his respective analysis, each author explains methodological conception and project execution. Each struggled with how to write his respective project for over a decade, considering and rejecting alternative models. But where James set labour history aside in a jump from modern to poststructural analytical frame-

works, French has not made the leap. *Drowning* signals the evolution of labour history, not its end.

This divergence marks two larger points about labour history, the history of work and scholarship since the late 1980s. First, researchers on the left in Canada and the United States studying Latin American workers have moved increasingly in James' direction. But French's work is far more in keeping with the ongoing importance of labour history in the historiography of Latin American countries – innovatively conceived but within the realm of the modern. That French's work bears this imprint is a tribute to the manner in which he draws on the current Brazilian scholarship. The French-James dichotomy also underlines the contributions of Duke University and, secondarily, the University of North Carolina in shaping historiographical continuity and change. Through the late 1980s, Charles Bergquist trained students at Duke, a top Latin American history program in the United States. When Bergquist left for the University of Washington (in part to reconnect with his labour activist roots in the Pacific Northwest), Duke hired another prominent labour historian, Daniel James. *Doña María* shows that as Duke scholars in many departments spearheaded change toward postmodernism in the 1990s, James was clearly influenced by those shifts and away from labour history methodologies that had defined his earlier work.

Duke University Press (where *Doña María* appeared) emerged as what many considered the leading publisher of monographs in Latin American history, both for the exceptional quality of its list and an editorial emphasis on path-breaking postmodern methodologies. In the meantime, in both Latin American and American history, the University of North Carolina Press charted an alternative course, publishing extremely well-edited monographs that were not postmodern. If *Doña María* marks the high water mark of the shift toward the postmodern at Duke University Press, *Drowning* represents the same for North Carolina's emphasis on scholarship that remains in the realm of the modern (despite, as in French's case, interest in and the application of postmodern methodologies). Ironically perhaps, when James left Duke for Indiana University five years ago, Duke hired John French as his replacement.

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